

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #0919/01 1131523
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 231523Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1516
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 5330
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 5844
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 5369
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3896
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 6185
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2996
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 2071
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1203
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 2379
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 1891
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 000919

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/23/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KWBG](#) [EG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: MOD ADVISOR COMMENTS ON EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE
MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL, ISRAELI SECURITY RELATIONSHIP
WITH JORDAN

Classified By: DCM Luis G. Moreno, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (S) Summary. Egyptian Intelligence Minister Soliman visited Israel April 22 and met separately with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Barak, and Foreign Minister Lieberman. According to MOD Arab affairs advisor Hacham, who participated in Soliman's meeting with Barak, they discussed Gaza smuggling, the arrest of the Hizballah cell in Sinai, and the need for Netanyahu to name a replacement for prisoner exchange negotiator Dekel, who resigned earlier this week. Hacham said Soliman stressed the strategic nature of Egyptian relations with Israel and conveyed a message of continuity. Barak and Soliman discussed Iran during a one-on-one session. Hacham noted that on a recent visit to Jordan, the Jordanian Army Chief of Staff and head of intelligence both praised security and intelligence cooperation between Jordan and Israel. Our sense is that Egyptian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli relations are increasingly being handled in intelligence channels, with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs largely cut out. End Summary.

12. (S) MOD Arab Affairs Advisor David Hacham briefed Pol Couns April 23 on Egyptian Minister of Intelligence Omar Soliman's April 22 meeting with Defense Minister Barak. Hacham, who attended the plenary session, said that Soliman was accompanied by his deputy, Omar Kinawi, and the Egyptian General Intelligence Service chief of station in Tel Aviv. Soliman brought a message of continuity in the Israeli-Egyptian strategic relationship following the formation of Prime Minister Netanyahu's government. Barak expressed appreciation for stepped-up Egyptian efforts to stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, though he also noted that large quantities of weapons and explosives were continuing to get through. Israel Defense Intelligence chief Major General Amos Yadlin provided a briefing on Iran's role in smuggling weapons into Gaza via the Red Sea and Sudan. Barak also praised Egypt's action in apprehending the Hizballah cell in Sinai. Soliman reportedly commented that EGIS had identified the cell even before Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in late December - early January, but had decided to gather more intelligence on the cell's plans before arresting them in early April. MOD Pol-Mil Director Amos Gilad briefed on Israel's views on Palestinian reconciliation talks and the situation on the ground in the West Bank. Gilad reportedly expressed willingness to work with the Egyptians to expedite the delivery of Egyptian humanitarian assistance to Gaza, but also criticized Egypt's

efforts to promote a new Palestinian unity government.

¶3. (S) According to Hacham, Soliman asked whether Netanyahu has decided who will replace Ofer Dekel as Israel's negotiator for the release of Gilad Shalit, but Barak indicated that no decision had been made yet. Soliman said Egypt understands Israel's insistence that there be progress on a prisoner exchange before Israel will reengage on a ceasefire agreement with Hamas, but Soliman stressed the importance to Egypt of formalizing a ceasefire in Gaza. Soliman said the Egyptians were pressing Hamas hard to prevent the launching of rockets and mortars and preserve the general atmosphere of quiet along the border. Barak again expressed appreciation for the Egyptian role. Asked whether the Olmert government's prisoner exchange terms were still on the table, Hacham said he assumed they were, adding that when the prisoner release talks broke down, Israel had agreed to release 325 Palestinians on Hamas' list but had rejected 125.

¶4. (S) Hacham said Barak and Soliman then met one on one. He thought Iran was the main topic of discussion during the closed session. Soliman reportedly told Barak that Hizballah is seeking to take over Lebanon and turn it into an Iranian base. Soliman separately met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Lieberman. He invited Netanyahu and Barak to visit Egypt. According to Israeli media reports, Netanyahu may travel to Egypt before visiting Washington next month. Barak told Soliman that he will visit Egypt after Netanyahu does.

¶5. (S) Hacham noted that the Israeli-Egyptian military joint working group on counter-smuggling is scheduled to meet again

in about two weeks, but the IDF is concerned that the Egyptian side is not preparing to engage seriously. Hacham said the Israelis still think there is a significant difference between the level of engagement demonstrated by Soliman and the much more reticent approach of Defense Minister Tantawi.

¶6. (S) Hacham also mentioned that during a recent visit to Jordan as part of an MOD delegation, Jordanian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Al-Sarayreh and intelligence director El-Raqqad both praised security cooperation with Israel, which they said continues to be vital to the survival of the Hashemite Kingdom. Noting Israeli-Jordanian tensions over the Mughrabi Gate ramp project in Jerusalem's Old City, Pol Couns said it would be helpful if Israel and Jordan could find ways to use the positive aspects of their relations to resolve disputes. Hacham said the Israelis distinguish between their "under the table" relations with Jordan's military and intelligence services and Jordan's public rhetoric, which they see as driven by anti-Israeli public opinion.

¶7. (S) Comment. The Israelis see Soliman's visit as an important signal of Mubarak's interest in keeping relations with Israel on track despite the formation of the Netanyahu government and especially Avigdor Lieberman's appointment as Foreign Minister. Maintaining strategic relations with Israel appears to have become increasingly the domain of intelligence chiefs in both Egypt and Jordan, with the Foreign Ministries in both countries largely out of the Israeli loop.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

CUNNINGHAM